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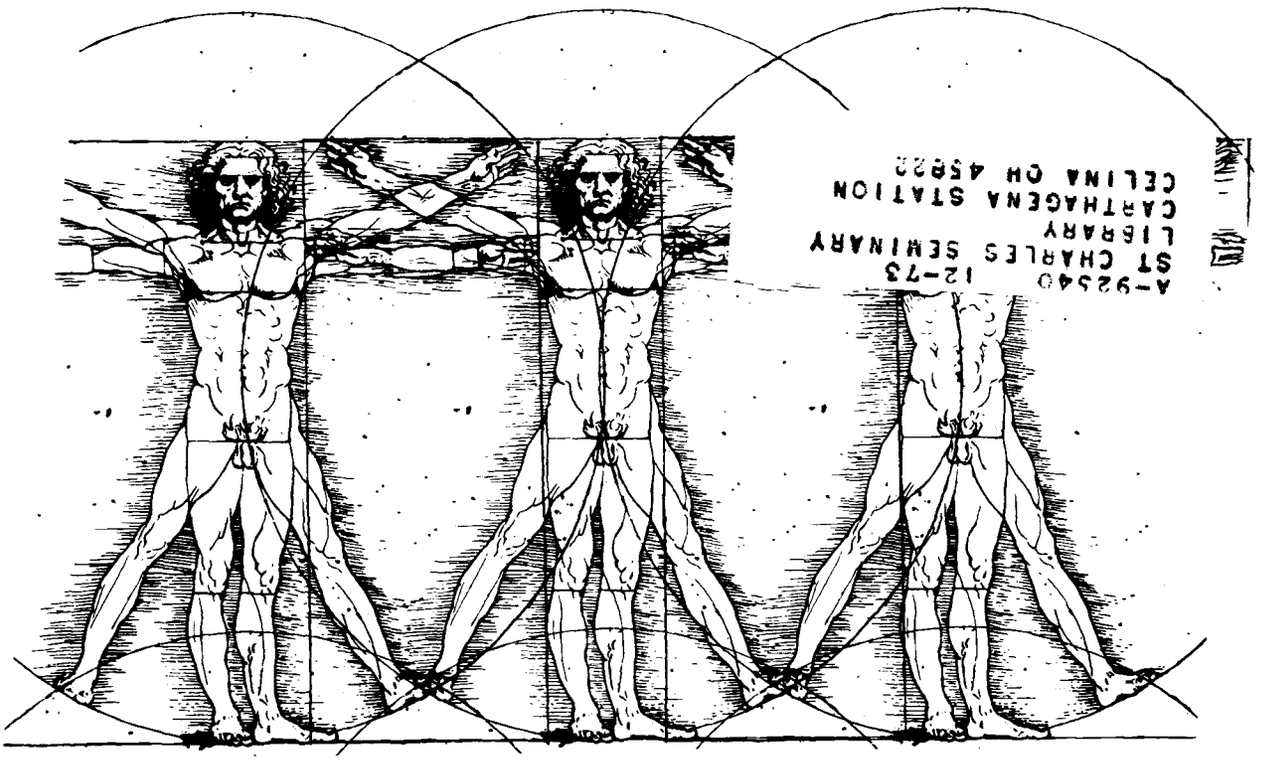
LOUIS DUPRE

THE HUMANIST MANIFESTO



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NEWS & VIEWS

Auden as Didymus

In 1942, three years after he had left England for the United States (thereby incurring the unkind cut from George Orwell that he was the type of person "who was always somewhere else when the trigger is pulled"), W. H. Auden walked into the offices of *Commonweal* and signed up as a columnist for the grand sum of $7.50 per column.

We all knew that Auden had written articles and poems over several years for *Commonweal*. No mystery about that. They appeared under his regular byline. The column, however, carried the pseudonym Didymus, and its identity became lost to the history of the magazine until matter of factly recalled by the present publisher and then editor, Edward Skillin, over lunch just after Auden's obit appeared on front pages. It sent me scurrying back to the bound volumes, where I found Auden's columns in Vol. XXXVII for 1942-43.

The Auden-Didymus columns appeared for several weeks under the heading, "Lecture Notes." They were a collection of random thoughts on religion, art and current topics, wherein Auden unmasked certain biases (as against psychoanalysis, which Auden lumped with "pagan *scientia*"), and made clear certain religious beliefs (indicating, for one thing, a preparedness to endure the "paradox" that "Jesus the individual historical man, was and is, as He claimed, Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father").

As Didymus, Auden was frequently Aesopian; e.g.:

"A married man and a married woman are tempted to commit adultery. They consult the Esthetic who asks smiling, 'Are you in love? Really? You're quite sure? Then, children, I give you my blessing.' Just to be on the safe side they consult the Ethical also who exclaims: 'How dare you suggest such a thing. Quite inexcusable under any circumstances. But there, there, don't cry. I'll help you. I have some excellent sedative pills. Take two every three hours.'

"As a last resort they consult the Religious who, before they can have even begun to tell their story, says: 'I know what you are going to ask. If you are not in love, the question is academic and you should be ashamed of wasting my time and yours. If you are in love, I am very glad, but the answer is no. Suffer and praise God.'"

Generally, however, Auden's Didymus ruminated on religion and art, anti-semitism and emotions. Following are a few of his contributions:

"Art cannot make a man want to become good, but it can prevent him from imagining that he already is; it cannot give him faith in God, but it can show him his despair."

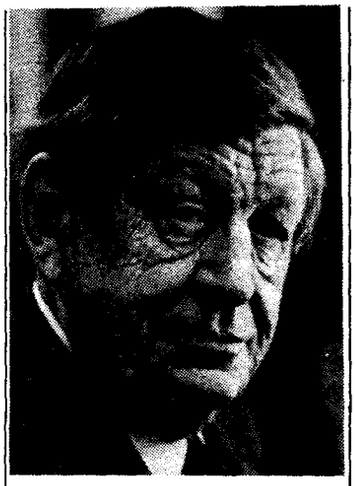
* * *

"A Christian . . . can lose his faith or never have won it without ever realizing it. He can be a pagan, and still grow red in the face over all the Communists and free-thinkers in our school system.

"The shocking proof that this is happening today is the appearance of anti-semitism among those who profess and call themselves Christians.

"The anti-semitism of the Middle Ages was a wicked thing, but at least it regarded the Jew as a heretic, not as a member of a racial group. It persecuted the Jew because he refused to be baptized.

"Modern anti-semitism, on the other hand, is one symptom of a Christendom which has taken offense at faith, but finding that nothing means



social breakdown, is determined to replace it by a pagan political religion. The Jew is persecuted because he cannot deceive himself. His witness is this—either faith or nothing. Whereas a corrupt Christian wants to say: 'Faith is too difficult; nothing is despair; we must have no God but Caesar. There might be no harm, though, in Caesar being a cleric'."

* * *

"The question of esthetic *taste*, of good and bad art in our sense, is unreal, for the criterion is magical efficiency. A school in Australia has a song, to the tune of *Men of Harlech*, which runs as follows:

We who wear the white and yellow
Sweetly sing and loudly bellow
Standing each one near her fellow
For the Girls' High School

If the alumnae are deeply moved by singing this, as they probably are, they will not think of asking if it is good poetry."

* * *

Finally, that Auden bit on psychoanalysis:

"Psychoanalysis, like all pagan *scientia*, says: 'Come, my good man, no wonder you feel guilty. You have a distorting mirror, and that is indeed a very wicked thing to have. But cheer up. For a trifling consideration I shall be delighted to straighten it out for you. There. Look. A perfect image. The evil of distortion is exorcised. Now you have nothing to repent of any longer. Now you are one of the illumined and elect. That will be ten thousand dollars, please.'

"And immediately come seven devils, and the last state of the man is worse than the first."

The psychoanalysis reflection doesn't sound much like W. H. Auden. But Didymus was a young man.

Radio Religion

WNBC-Radio, which got in a hassle five years ago with Catholics when it shifted "The Catholic Hour" (now "Guideline") to dead radio time, finds itself in a similar imbroglio today with Lutherans.

Lutherans are protesting a decision to drop the "Lutheran Hour" entirely from WNBC's FM programming and provide it with 6:30 a.m. Sunday slot on the AM band (when about the only ones up, around New York anyway, are the "stuffers" of the *New York Times* and other unlikely listeners to the "Lutheran Hour").

The administrator of the Mass Media Department of the Lutheran Laymen's League, Tommy Thompson, has charged WNBC with "continuing abuse of the broadcast," and backed the charge by itemizing the "bouncing around" which the program has allegedly received since its first broadcast on the station in 1956.

WNBC denies, of course, that it has any ax to grind. "The difficulty we have in broadcasting is how do you placate everyone," said Perry Baskin, a WNBC official.

Nevertheless, the incident is an item for the files of those who are convinced that the media, and radio particularly, are moving religion inexorably downward in their tables of priorities.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

The Watergate 'Grads'

Corpus Christi, Tex.

To the Editors: In reference to your thoughtful editorial on the schools and the lawbreakers ["They Went To College," Sept. 7], perhaps it would be interesting for your readers to know what the professors themselves have to say.

As their last order of business, the delegates to the 59th annual meeting of the American Association of University Professors, representing some 90,000 members, adopted the following resolution April 28th:

"The Fifty-ninth Annual Meeting of the American Association of University Professors profoundly regrets the Watergate Scandal and is alarmed at the breakdown in law and order, the decay of public morality, and the excessive permissiveness of which this incident is symptomatic.

"That all the persons allegedly involved in this felonious and fraudulent affront to freedom and fair play are graduates of American institutions of higher education causes us to grieve that we failed in not helping them to overcome their character defects and asocial and larcenous propensities while they were in our tutelage.

"Having the courage and humility not to cover up our past wrong-doing, we urge that university professors confess their sins of omission and combat the tragic example given to their students by lawyers who allegedly flout the law, administrators who allegedly manipulate the truth. We dedicate ourselves to trying harder to steer *this* generation of students away from a life of crime and toward an enhanced respect for the Constitution, justice, and ethics."

RALPH THIBODEAU

Literary Rip-offs

Port Washington, N.Y.

To the Editors: I am troubled by an attitude Saul Maloff states in his review of Norman Mailer's *Marilyn* in your

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AID FOR AID

The facts are simple enough. The world is sharply divided into rich and poor. We in the United States are rich—indeed, we live in what is by far the richest country in the world. We constitute a minority of the world's population, but we consume a lion's share of the world's goods. In the underdeveloped countries, on the other hand, hunger and malnutrition are everyday facts of life—or death. This is so true that the leavings from an American table would feed many a poor family elsewhere in the world far better than they now manage.

The moral implications of all this seem inescapable. Are we as a nation to imitate the priest and Levite in the Gospel and pass our brother by? If our Judeo-Christian tradition means anything to us, the answer has to be no. Yet never in the years since World War II has the moral climate of the nation been so hostile to foreign aid on the scale that is needed, as was demonstrated in the recent Senatorial debate on the matter. True, the United States has made some effort, but it has not been enough, and now the temptation is to throw up our hands in despair. In part this feeling flows from the distortions and corruptions worked in the name of foreign aid in this and previous Administrations. This we can understand: we too have no desire to arm the underdeveloped nations in the name of foreign aid; we too have no wish to pay for Thieu's tiger cages. But foreign aid should be reformed, not slaughtered; the fact of abuses in the past should not be used to kill the whole idea of help for the poor abroad.

Another factor that is undoubtedly working against aid for poor nations is the determination of many liberals in Congress to channel more money to the poor and needy at home. Serious as the problems of poverty in this country are, however, they should not completely overshadow the fact that men, women and children are literally dying of hunger in other parts of the world for lack of aid. Bad as life is in an American slum, it beats that in a mud-floored hut in Africa or Latin America. In any case, funds for the hungry abroad should not have to come out of those needed for the poor at home—not when our arms spending runs to $80 billion a year.

It is against this background that one should judge not only Congres-

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sional discussion of aid but the recent announcement of the World Bank that it would lend $22 billion to poor countries over the next five years—an encouraging rise of 40 percent over the past five years. Yet the World Bank alone still cannot do what needs to be done, and in recent years the United States has been dragging its feet. Take the plight of the International Development Association. This body is the World Bank's "soft-loan" subsidiary, assisting the most underdeveloped nations with a total population of more than a billion people, many of them in areas now devastated by drought. The IDA works with the poorest of the poor, and its efforts are vital, but as things stand now it will be out of funds by the middle of next year. Meanwhile the rich nations have been negotiating and negotiating over replenishing the funds, with the U.S. bargaining hard to reduce its share from 40 percent to one-third. Recently the U.S. won that reduction, and we have pledged $4.5 billion over the next three years for low-cost loans to the world's poorest nations, but even this lower figure is still in danger in Congress.

It is this ungenerous approach to genuine foreign aid that needs to be changed as the House and Senate versions of the aid bill go to conference and as the matter is considered in future sessions. Much of our aid goes to nations in which what passes as affluence would strike even poor Americans as bare subsistence. The crying need in these countries is to release those living in absolute poverty from the bondage of centuries, and this is not easily done. The aid we have given up to now has helped, but it has not been enough. Now the Senate has passed an admittedly imperfect bill calling for $1.2 billion in aid, even less than the House has already authorized—a figure which means we would spend $80 on arms for every $1 spent on foreign aid. Surely we can do better than that; surely we cannot turn an increasingly deaf ear to the pleas for help from the world's poor. God has abundantly blessed us with material goods, and it is only right that we share at least a small portion of them in a reformed and enlarged program of foreign aid. This is a moral imperative, certainly, but is it not also the best kind of long-range practical politics? How long can the world live in peace half-affluent and half-despairing?

JOHN COGLEY

John Cogley's decision to leave Roman Catholicism for the Episcopal Church is arousing considerable interest. Mr. Cogley was, of course, one of the editors here from 1949 to 1954 and a regular columnist for even longer. As is natural, then, people are asking our reaction to his move.

Mr. Cogley's association with the editors here has always been one of friendship as well as a professional relationship—indeed, in my case that friendship goes back over 30 years, to life together before World War II at the Chicago Catholic Worker and to our founding of *Today,* the Catholic Student Magazine, after the war. I and his other friends have always known him as preeminently a man of conscience, and the reasons he has given for his present decision amply demonstrate that fact. His position is one with which I and the other editors here do not agree, or we would not be where we are. But those who know him as we do will have no doubt at all of Mr. Cogley's complete good faith, and we certainly have nothing but good wishes for him, combined with regret over a real loss to American Catholicism. It is sad that a man of John Cogley's good will no longer felt at home with his viewpoint inside Roman Catholicism; if there is tragedy in the matter, it is this.

JAMES O'GARA

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HEATH IN DUBLIN

JOHN BULL IN THE CHINA SHOP

Political commentators were not slow in previewing the Sept. 17th visit of British Prime Minister Edward Heath to Dublin to meet Irish Premier Liam Cosgrave as being an historic stage in Anglo-Irish relations. There was much evidence to support such a preview: this was the first official meeting of Irish and British Premiers in Eire since the founding of the Irish State in 1922; the meeting was taking place several weeks in advance of the election by the Northern Ireland Assembly of its Executive; the meeting was taking place at a time when the Irish and British Governments had started exchanging views about the details of a new cross-border institution, the Council of Ireland.

However, the Political Commentators and correspondents ended up analyzing, criticizing or explaining away an unguarded remark by Mr. Heath. The visit became as histrionic in hard-news terms as it is historical in diplomatic perspective. Fairly late in the evening after his eight-hour meeting with Mr. Cosgrave at their secret rendezvous in an old army aerodrome on the outskirts of Dublin, Mr. Heath gave an interview with BBC Northern Ireland. In this interview he said that he

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would favor the total integration of Northern Ireland with Britain if the proposed Executive was not set up by March of next year.

This might have been a well-meaning warning on the part of Mr. Heath to urge Northern Ireland politicians to stop time-wasting tactics and get down to the serious business of making politics work in the North. Whatever the intention, the remark caused an avalanche of protest from Northern Ireland politicians and from the British Labor Party. Almost like a school bully being scolded by masters, Mr. Heath had to issue a statement making it clear that he had no intention of integrating Northern Ireland into Britain.

Mr. Heath's BBC remarks caused dismay in Dublin as they conflicted with the joint communiqué issued by the two Premiers after their meeting in which the role of the Republic in finding a solution to the Northern Ireland problem was acknowledged. According to Dublin sources Mr. Heath gave no indication to Mr. Cosgrave that he was in any way considering the integration of Northern Ireland into Britain.

The controversy over the integration remarks, while it may leave deep-rooted suspicions among Northern politicians about Mr. Heath, is undoubtedly a storm in a teacup as far as relations between the Dublin and London Governments are concerned. These relations have never been so cordial or cooperative despite the recent revelations that two British criminals, Kenneth and Keith Littlejohn, had been spying for Britain in the Republic, and despite the spate of bombs, presumed to be by the IRA, in London and other English cities.

There was, therefore, general agreement in Dublin that the meeting did mark an historic stage in Anglo-Irish relations—despite the vagueness of both leaders about what they discussed. There was also agreement that the main topic for discussion was the proposal of the Council of Ireland. On the positive side, the meeting was seen by political commentators in Dublin to have resulted in an agreement by the two Premiers to try and organize a conference to be attended by representatives of their respective Governments as well as by representatives from all the political parties in Northern Ireland to discuss details of the structure and form of such a Council of Ireland.

Commenting on the conference, the political correspondent of the *Irish Times* wrote: "It is clear that the Dublin Government considers this to be quite a gain and they are confident that such a conference would do much to explain clearly to the Northerners the sincerity of their desire that no change should take place without their full consent."

In agreeing to such a conference Mr. Heath is regarded in Dublin as having shown greater willingness than any previous British Prime Minister to agree to the concept of a Council of Ireland. However, it is clear that differences as to the timing of such a conference remained unsettled by the end of the meeting. Mr. Cosgrave urged that the formation of the Northern Ireland Executive should at least be contemporaneous with the setting up of the Council of Ireland. He clearly envisages such a two-front advance as the best means of restoring peace in the North. Mr. Heath, on the other hand, stressed the British Government belief that a Northern Ireland Executive must be formed before the proposed tripartite conference to discuss the Council takes place.

Another area of disagreement appears to have been the role of Britain in such a Council. Mr. Cosgrave put across the view that it should be an all-Irish body, North and South, only, whereas Mr. Heath emphasized that the Council should have both a British and a European dimension.

Again on the positive side from the Dublin point of view was the presence of the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Jack Lynch, for part of the discussions with Mr. Heath. This is seen as an indication that despite the Littlejohn Affair the bi-lateral policy of the Coalition Government and the Opposition Party, Fianna Fail, towards the North still operates.

Stressing that the Council of Ireland functions should include responsibility for security, economic matters and tourism, Mr. Lynch said after his visit to Baldonnel: "Any solution to the Northern problem to be successful must be acceptable to the people of the Republic." Mr. Lynch also said that he had repeated to Mr. Heath his belief that "the lasting peaceful solution can only be found in the context of a united Ireland."

On this point of unity there is a difference of emphasis by Mr. Cosgrave, who has indicated that he would be prepared to recognize the independent status of Northern Ireland provided a Government there was representative of the interests of the minority and provided also that a majority of the Northern population wished to remain British. In return for such a recognition it is thought that Mr. Cosgrave envisages the Council of Ireland existing with supervisory powers over the police in regard to a common law-enforcement policy. This body according to Mr. Cosgrave's wishes would also have supervisory powers over the Civil Service.

Although it is still too early to accurately assess the significance of the meeting of the Prime Ministers, it may have some symbolic value in that the European card is replacing the Orange Card and the Green Flag. Yet if the Council of Ireland has a firm foundation in Dublin, it is only beginning to take root in London. If it is to be successful it must also take root in Belfast. On that at least, Mr. Heath and Mr. Cosgrave are in agreement. It is up to Belfast politicians to recognize this political reality. JOHN COONEY

(John Cooney is Commonweal's *regular correspondent in Ireland.)*

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BRING BACK THE COMMON MAN

MICHAEL NOVAK

Often in historical researches one encounters a phrase that now evokes nostalgia: "the common man." It was a phrase that rang for Walt Whitman and Carl Sandburg and Jack London. Isn't it curious how the phrase has all but disappeared?

America was to be a nation built of, by, and for the common man. It would be a Republic of commoners, freed of kings and nobles and hereditary plutocracies. It would be vulgar, popular, commonsensical, democratic.

The excitement of this dream spread across the world. In the land of my grandparents, horrible tales circulated —of relatives mangled in the mines, dying of influenza, disappearing from contact like stones dropped in an inky pond. America was not imagined as a place where all succeeded, a place where streets were paved with gold. It was imagined as a place where men and women could work for themselves instead of for landholders, could live as equals, could thrive in a land designed to be ruled by the common man.

H. L. Mencken was not the last to mock the level of taste and spiritual achievement of the common man, whom he called *boobus Americanus.* Educated elites have become ever more embarrassed by their fellow citizens. Norman Mailer replaces Mencken's phrase with "the wad." James Wechsler suffers deep anxieties every time he writes of Archie Bunker, who turns to Joesixpack as Americans used to turn to the "common man."

Many of the educated no longer look to "the herd" for wisdom or virtue or insight. Many have accepted the notion that people are born dumb, parochial, unenlightened and immoral, until they have been "educated."

Thus today the schools "save." Years of education correlate with "enlightened" political attitudes. (Conservative candidates, however, still take a majority of the votes of the college-educated. Progressive candidates win with "the common man.")

Do all Americans want their children to be highly educated? Many Americans dislike the morality propagated through the rituals of schooling. Their kids need education "to get ahead," so they accept the bad with the good.

A sense of their own superior morality unconsciously pervades many teachers and school administrators, especially in working-class districts. How appalling are the descriptions of students and students' parents voiced by some who think of themselves as missionaries sent into regions of outer darkness.

Some mock the life-styles, mores, values, and "prejudices" of common people, oblivious to their own. Some make it their task to separate children from parents, neighborhoods, and local cultures. This separation they call "enlightenment."

This gap—in moral vision, taste, and way of life—between the educated and the uneducated is perhaps the greatest gap in American life. It cuts across political Left and Right. It divides women's liberation from the vast base it ought to have. It cuts across almost all social movements.

Can anyone believe that all the wisdom is on one side of this separation?

Is not the only known seedbed of honesty, kindness, compassion, responsibility, craftsmanship, and moral courage the ordinary family? Are there not such families among the poor as well as among the rich? among pipefitters and hairdressers as well as among psychiatrists and television commentators? Is it not true that many today in cultivated and influential places were nourished by "common people"?

When one thinks of factories spewing clouds of red dust and soot into clean air, is one to lay the blame on the workers at the white-hot furnaces, or on corporate executives, lawyers and engineers? The top 15 percent of our population consumes 50 percent of the nation's goods. Who, then, are the chief exploiters of the world's resources? The affluent families with their two children would seem to support all radical-liberal political programs except one: to change their own patterns of life.

Working-class people were early reluctant to see the United States become involved in Vietnam (LBJ won in a landslide by promising no involvement). Later, how could they scorn the all-too-tangible losses and sacrifices experienced by their own families? Should we, then, give all the moral credit on the question of war and peace to "the best and the brightest," whose leadership first invented and then repudiated the morality of that struggle?

Among our radical-liberal elites, so swollen in number since World War II, "elitism" is an offensive word. But the educated who invent, promote, execute and profit by technological change comprise genuine elites—elites of affluence, mobility, education, and consumption.

Common people are often far less mesmerized by the ethic of success, upward mobility, and consumerism than those who mock them. Every advertiser knows the habits of consumption among those whose incomes are over $15,000 per year, beyond the range of the vast majority of working people.

Our elites, including our radicals, are the chief beneficiaries of our present social order and its unjust racial practices. They seem complacent in their own morality, while holding the common man uniquely guilty of racism. That is the most hypocritical cut

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THE NEW HUMANIST MANIFESTO

LOUIS DUPRE

A basic misunderstanding regarding the meaning and purpose of religion

In the Spring of 1972, a Catholic-Humanist dialogue took place at the John La Farge Institute in New York. After three days of discussion it had become obvious to most participants that the traditional humanist objections to institutional religion no longer hit the mark. Whether by planning or by chaos, the Catholic Church had clearly surpassed what the humanists had for so many years attacked and, in several instances, rightly attacked. The time had come, it seemed, when the humanist movement would be able to concentrate entirely on its positive objective: the future of man. Since Christians shared most of its social concerns, some of us started considering membership in the Humanist Association. We were just waiting for some official indication that the old anti-religious slogan had been dropped.

To those anticipations of a new era in the humanist movement, Manifesto II, which appears in the current issue of *The Humanist*, gives the death-blow. My respect for humanist principles would prevent me from subscribing to this document even if I were a militant atheist. For a fair presentation of what others hold sacred would seem to be an essential implication of those principles. Yet the modern believer will not recognize his faith in the manifesto's main target—theist religion. Also, common decency and elementary veracity should have stopped the writers from questioning the moral idealism in the very faiths which for centuries alone nurtured it and from which the humanist movement inherited it. Did the men who wrote this strange document ever hear what their opponents said during the dialogue? Did they ever attempt to understand? Or are they, like the Bourbon dynasty, unable to learn as well as to forget old grudges? At any rate, the recent dialogue was clearly a waste of time.

If the direction of the Humanist Association deems it necessary to replace John Dewey's well-reasoned and well-written document, one would assume that it had something new to say. But the present rambling essay consists merely of an unabashed profession of 19th-century faith in the scientist ideal, occasionally interrupted by old-fashioned attacks on organized religion. For today's problems they offer the following solution: "The controlled use of scientific methods, which have transformed the natural and social sciences since the Renaissance, must be extended further in the solution of human problems." In other words, more of the same methods that led to the disasters denounced in this document are supposed to save us in the end.

It is difficult to summarize the ideas of the manifesto, because the only thread that holds the various topics together is an aversion to "traditional dogmatic or authoritative religions." The positive guidelines for the development of the individual, democracy, the world community and "humanity as a whole" are written in the vague language of universals so familiar to Catholics from papal encyclicals. I would not be surprised to learn that certain passages have their remote origins in past ecclesiastical documents. Where else would one read such statements as this: "The preciousness and dignity of the individual person is a central humanist value. Individuals should be encouraged to realize their own creative talents and desires." I certainly do not recall ever having met anyone who would disagree with this principle. Or with the following, phrased in impeccable pontifical prose: "We deplore the division

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of humankind on nationalistic grounds. We have reached a turning point in human history where the best option is to transcend the limits of national sovereignty and to move toward the building of a world-community in which all sectors of the human family can participate." Right on! Unfortunately the authors abandon this mellow, ecclesiastical prose when addressing themselves to their main concrete objective: the evils of institutional religion. Thus we read in the preface: "Salvationism, based on mere affirmation(?) still appears as harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter." (Why did the literary people not edit this document before signing it?)

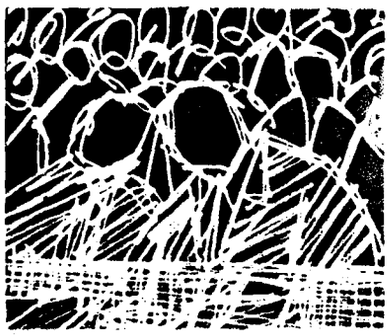
Yet those are trivial matters compared to the content. The believer will be shocked to learn that atheists (or at least non-theists) are the sole legitimate heirs of the humanist tradition. Or what is one to make of the following suggestive assertion: "Humanism traces its roots from ancient China, classical Greece and Rome, through the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, to the scientific revolution of the modern world. But views that merely reject theism are not equivalent to humanism. They lack commitment to the positive belief in the possibilities of human progress. . . ."

A-theism may not be enough for a genuine humanist attitude, but it is a necessary condition! I do not know a great deal about ancient China, but I doubt that it was a hotbed of ideas of progress. Even classical Greece with its cyclical theory of history would be a strange place to pick as the mother-soil of progressivism. On the other hand, the Hebrew culture and its Christian development with their emphasis on the historical uniqueness of events do not appear among the roots. But more importantly, all the original humanist civilizations that do appear, are, with the possible exception of the last two, clearly religious and explicitly "theistic." Even the Enlightenment and the scientific revolution had religious origins, as Whitehead and a number of recent historians of science have shown.

Why should those of us who remain within that humanist tradition of the past no longer be entitled to the name in the present? At least in the past, if we may believe the authors' list, it was not impossible to believe in God and in man at once. Why should one belief today exclude the other? Does it really detract from human dignity to attribute a transcendent dimension to man? Of course it does, if the whole transcendent message is reduced to "promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation," or if the concept of soul is pitted against "an emergence (of the species) from natural evolutionary forces"! But if humanists consider the rejection of "theistic religion" so important, at least they ought to take the time to find out what it says.

The manifesto implies that humanists alone have the right attitude toward ethics and that "dogmatic religion" hampers ethical development. "In the best sense, religion may inspire dedication to the highest ethical ideals. . . . We believe, however, that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs do a disservice to the human species." Certainly a strange way of putting it! As if the believer *preferred* revelation or creed to need and experience. What happens, on the contrary, is that the acceptance of revelation and creed in our time precisely originates in a deeply felt need and a most fundamental experience.

To the need for transcendence, so clearly perceived by the new generation, the writers of this manifesto appear to remain totally obtuse. They simply assume that believers are less enlightened (or, perhaps, more afraid) than humanists. I am willing to overlook the arrogance, rooted in incredible ignorance, of the life-style which they so summarily dismiss. But not the advocation of the shallow 18th- and 19th-century ideals of progress, science and democracy as a solution for the problems



of our time. To write of the existence of "a supernatural" that is "either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race," is to close one's eyes and one's ears to strong aspirations and needs clearly articulated in our time. To ignore them is a sign of cultural senility!

A look at the list of signatures somewhat explains this remarkable closedness to the currents of our time. The largest single category is that of "emeriti professors," but the list contains also a good number of "retired" ministers (I cannot but wonder about the content of their past sermons) and "former" presidents of one organization or another. Despite the presence of impressive names (Sakharov, for instance) the list hardly represents the segment of the intellectual community that is most alive today. In fact, a great number of them could easily have signed the previous manifesto published 40 years ago.

Considering the authors' expressed aversion to the "dogmatic," the reader will be surprised by their own peremptory decisions on complex ethical questions. Thus we read without proof or justification: "Ethics is autonomous and situational." Does that mean that the humanists accept no universal, ethical principles? If it does, a good many moralists, including such an outstanding one as the atheist Nikolai Hartman, are ex-

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cluded from the humanist flock. But, more to the point, in the name of which ethical norms, then, do the authors so strongly condemn certain forms of behavior? The Nazis, mentioned in the preface, were perfect "situationists." There obviously must be more to it. But the manifesto fails to enlighten us about any guiding principles. Thus it pleads for sexual liberation, but argues against "mindless permissiveness or unbridled promiscuity." At which point does permissiveness become mindless, and promiscuity unbridled? What does the "right to abortion," mentioned under "undue repression of sexual conduct" (!), imply? Whose right is at stake? And in the name of which principle? Which, if any, are the restrictions? Without clarifying the underlying principles, one is not really saying anything at all, because even the most conservative Catholic will allow an abortion when the mother's life is in danger. At times one feels that what is announced here as humanist "principles" are merely the various feelings about the controversial subjects that happened to pass through some humanist's head. Yet for those who do not consider those "principles" self-evident, to accept them unexamined (as they are here proposed) would be to commit the most heinous humanist crime: to be dogmatic.

A fundamental misunderstanding in the Manifesto is the assumption that the meaning and purpose of religion consists in the intellectual acceptance of dogmatic creeds on the one hand, and a conflicting dedication to ethical ideas on the other hand. Neither one of them is entirely true and the total perspective is entirely false. The meaning of religious dogma is not to provide intellectual information which the mind is unable to gather by itself, but rather to articulate the awareness of another dimension in ordinary reality, and thus to unite the disparate moments of existence into a new ultimate meaning. The believer, then, does not pretend, or at least should not pretend, to *know* more than the unbeliever by adding what he accepts on faith to what he knows by intellectual effort. He can fully agree with the manifesto's claim that there is no substitute for reason and intelligence as "the most effective instruments" of the human race. Yet the believer *interprets* differently what he knows, and this interpretation is, always inadequately, expressed in the dogmas of a religious tradition. Since those articulations are not concerned with the objects of ordinary knowledge, they neither directly promote nor interfere with scientific or philosophical developments. Under no conditions should religious creeds be regarded as substitutes for scientific truths as the manifesto assumes. We readily concede that the whole history of the relations between faith and religion is one of constant interference. But the manifesto claims, to deal with the present and the future, not with the past.

Morality, both social and private, is the humanist's supreme concern. It is understandable, then, that he ascribes the same view to the believer, with the difference (a) that the believer is not allowed to discover his own code of conduct nor to live by the light of his own reason; (b) that he needs the additional sanction of reward or punishment in an afterlife. But such a picture totally misrepresents the view of faith. Religious people of various faiths have shown great moral concern without any promise of heaven or threat of hell (e.g., in most forms of Buddhism). Also recent polls have indicated that the sanction of an afterlife plays a minor role in the behavioral motivation of the contemporary Christian. Finally, to most of us the Church does not function as an inventor of moral rules, but rather as a guiding light in the personal *discovery* of right and wrong.

Lingering Authoritarianism

In a stage of cultural infancy, when the Church was the main educational institution, its moral authority remained practically unchallenged. Regretfully enough, authoritarianism lingered on many years after the cultural emancipation of the layman. But certainly today ecclesiastical authority is no longer the decisive factor in the educated believer's code of conduct. The moral authority of the Church remains an important factor in the formation of his conscience. But the intellectual Catholic community's almost universal dissent with Rome's official stand on artificial birth control and partial dissent with the decisions on abortion and remarriage after divorce, abundantly prove that the educated ultimately follow their own moral insights. More and more Christians realize that the rules of morality can be discovered only by a long and painful process, and that they must no longer rely on the Church to feed them readymade solutions. Indeed, the Church's own directives more and more take the form of guiding rules rather than of specific imperatives.

Yet the most misleading part of the manifesto's assumption is that the believer's primary concern is morality (authoritarian or autonomous). This is simply not true.

The Church has always considered itself more a haven for sinners than a breeder of saints. It has at times shown a shocking lack of concern for moral righteousness. Of course, a good deal of this neglect may be attributed to inner corruption. But by no means all. The communion of faith, at least the Christian one, is not the communion of the righteous, but the union of those who in a particular way crave redemption. And that means a lot more than the adoption of higher moral standards. It means to adopt a different outlook and life-style altogether and to do so by means of symbols, beliefs, rituals and also, to be sure, good deeds. But above all, it means that our own efforts are never the final decisive factor. Thus morality itself, although it

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is to be taken seriously by the man of faith, must ultimately be relativized. Kierkegaard expressed this in the shocking but accurate paradox that faith requires the suspension of the ethical. Even though it is only a suspension, not a permanent suppression, religious man can never again consider it an absolute in human existence.

What are we to make of all this? That the humanists have not yet learned what religious believers are really after. This would not be so bad if the entire Manifesto II had not been a confrontation with their assumed beliefs. No dialogue is possible with the present "ignoratio elenchi." We anxiously await Manifesto III in order to join forces in the service of an integral humanism.

DEAD HEAT IN SWEDEN

ARMAND SCHWAB, JR.

An election that defies any traditional analysis

"Post-industrial" is a chic but elusive adjective that tends to define itself slowly and empirically as it is used. Well, there was something post-industrial about the Swedish election last month: new kinds of issues and a lineup of voters that defies any traditional analysis along spectrums such as left-right, country-city, rich-poor.

What happened was simply that Prime Minister Olof Palme and his Social Democratic Party lost their majority in the single-chamber parliament. When the new Riksdag convenes next January (there is still a Fall session to be played out with the present membership), the Social Democrats and their passive supporters, the Communists, will have 175 seats instead of 180. The three-party "bourgeois" opposition will have 175 seats instead of 170. If there is a tie vote on any issue it will be settled by lot. Aside from the un-Swedish drama of a dead heat, the election drew attention because the Social Democrats have governed Sweden for 41 years, since before the New Deal, before Hitler. Moreover, there is always a special newsy flavor when one of the European labor or social democratic parties is voted out of office—as if people were voting against Santa Claus and thus proving that Santa Claus is really bad for you.

Actually the September 16 result did not represent all that much of a change. In the last election, in 1970, the Social Democrats took 45.3 percent of the vote and the Communists 4.8 for a combined "socialist bloc" share of 50.1 percent. (The Communists are not included in the Government but are willing to vote with the Social Democrats in a pinch.) The opposition had 47.6 percent of the 1970 vote. (The rest went to minor parties; those that poll less than 4 percent are not represented in the Riksdag.) Last month the percentages were 43.6 for the Social Democrats and 5.3 for the Communists for a total of 48.9 percent, and 48.8 percent for the combined opposition. A switch of 1.2 percent of the popular vote—not a wild swing. Actually it was a surprise that the Social Democrats came out as well as they did: The polls had them trailing the opposition consistently, by as much as 7 percent; the margin narrowed through the summer but was still 4 percent on September 1.

Even a small swing can be significant, however. Does this one represent that old journalist favorite, "a swing to the right?" No. There is a remarkably stolid consensus in favor of Sweden's mixed economy (vigorous capitalism on the production side, "functional socialism" moderating consumption). There has been so little nationalization that there is nothing much that could be denationalized. There is no talk of eliminating any social insurance schemes or other social legislation. (I once asked a leading banker what the bourgeois parties would do if they took power. He thought hard and finally said, "We might increase the waiting time for sick pay from one day to three days.") When the Social Democrats proposed, in mid-campaign, that individuals' contributions to the state pension system be abolished and replaced by a payroll tax, all three opposition parties hurried to second the motion. And what are the opposition parties, after all? Not exactly rightist. The big winner (going from 69 to 90 seats) was the Center Party, the former Farmers' Party, which supported the Social Democrats from 1933 to 1936 and joined them in coalitions in the late Thirties and again in the Fifties. Having turned to the cities from the denuded countryside and changed its name in 1957, the Center Party has recently made an all-out effort to take blue-collar votes away from the Social Democrats. It makes anti-big-business sounds and its leaders probably have fewer links to businessmen than the Social Democratic bigwigs do. Then there are the Liberals, who lost heavily in the election (from 58 to 34 seats).

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They are reformers and libertarians from way back. The most conservative group, fittingly called the Moderate Party, is about as far right as a sophisticated Eastern Republican. At that, the Moderates are barely tolerated as allies by the Center and the Liberals, and would have to fudge their principles to join in a bourgeois coalition government. (The election result, incidentally, implied no criticism of the tough line Mr. Palme has taken against the U.S. role in Vietnam. It was not an issue in the campaign. Indeed, all the opposition leaders had joined the Prime Minister last Christmas in sponsoring a petition demand that the U.S. stop bombing and that both sides end the war. The petition got 2,800,000 signatures!)

If it was not left-right ideology that swung the votes, what was it? Two different kinds of influences seem to have been at work: bread-and-butter issues and a new set of what are really "luxury" concerns born of affluence, sophistication and a critique of Swedish society that began with intellectuals but has actually affected the national mood.

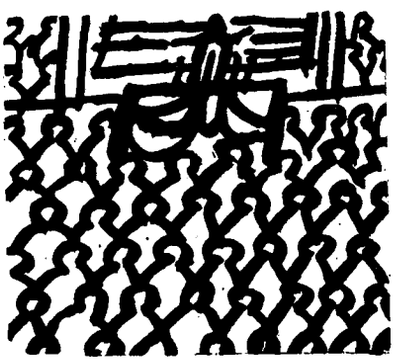
Bread and butter first. The economy, which had boomed through the Sixties, providing an annual growth increment to be divided among taxes, profits and wages, flattened out in 1971; inflation kept going (although at a lower rate than in most European countries). Food has been ridiculously expensive, and a 17.5 percent value-added tax doesn't help. Income taxes, among the world's highest, reach a marginal rate of 50 percent somewhere in the skilled-labor wage bracket. Swedes are not against free hospitalization and all the rest, but they don't like to pay for it all; they want to be able to pay for color television and a Volvo and four weeks' vacation in Spain and a summer cottage. The economy's strong recovery this year is still visible primarily to statisticians, and unemployment remains at between 2.5 and 3.5 percent of the labor force depending on how you classify publicly supported retraining programs—high for a country that really believes in full employment and attained it in the Sixties. So there was plenty to be angry about, and the Social Democrats, as the incumbents, were fair game.

But something else was going on too. The Social Democrats wrought a rational society, operated by a large but rather responsive bureaucracy, based on hard work, efficiency and a general benevolent conspiracy among big labor, big business and big government. It is perhaps the ultimate industrial welfare state. And it has been coming in for post-industrial criticism.

First there was the whole battery of "environmental" issues. The Government moved effectively against pollution but it could not cure the vague malaise about abandonment of the countryside, concentration in three major metropolitan regions, damming of rivers, clear-felling of forests. Environmentalism found an ally in the Swedish nature mystique, in nostalgia for the good old rural days, in distrust of cities.

"Luxury" issues proliferated. Having achieved decent pay and hours, workers want a better industrial environment and increased job satisfaction. The Government finally caught up with the demand for housing by building high-rise apartments on the fringe of every city and town—and people want single-family houses. The medical system is criticized for its delays and impersonality. And in general there is a demand for decentralization of power—from Stockholm to the county governments, from city-planners to neighborhoods, from efficiency experts to the factory floor.

And there, waiting like a centerfielder who has judged a fly ball well, stood the Center Party. For years it had stressed "decentralization" (whatever that means, said the Social Democrats) as a general panacea. It had started talking environment in 1962. Its agrarian background speaks to Swedes of little red houses on green islands in blue lakes; the Social Democrats have the feel of bureacracy, theory, expertise and bigness. The contrast is personalized by the parties' leaders, Mr. Palme and Thorbjörn Fälldin, the head of the Center Party and the man who would be Prime Minister in a bourgeois Government. Mr. Palme is brilliant and often acerbic, talks fast and looks French. Mr. Fälldin is placid, talks



slowly and looks like (and is) a Swedish farmer. Even in a parliamentary election voters think about the party leaders. And a poll last June showed that 41 percent of the voters thought Mr. Fälldin "would be the best Prime Minister," to 37 percent for Mr. Palme.

How, in the face of all this, did the Social Democrats hold on? Organized labor has deep allegiance to the party, rooted in remnants of class distinctions as well as economics. Moreover, the Social Democrats have stored up a large debt of gratitude among Swedes with a folk memory of 19th Century poverty. The Social Democrats are known, the Center unknown, the bourgeois parties in general suspect. It must have been a lot easier for many Swedes to complain about the Government than to seal a bourgeois-party ballot in their voting envelopes.

What happens now? Mr. Palme could resign but he has said he will not. He could lose a vote on a "question of confidence" in the new Riksdag, thus bringing on a

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new election. He might possibly ask the Liberals to join a coalition government; after their heavy loss they are somewhat disenchanted with bourgeois-party cooperation, and so they just might accept. Or he can try to muddle through, attracting the few votes he needs from the left edges of the Liberal and Center parties. Since 1970 there have been few issues on which the final vote followed party lines; the major reforms went through with large majorities, as Mr. Palme pointed out after the election. "We have time," he said. "We can see how the Liberals and the Center react to our proposals." That may be wishful thinking; with the Government up for grabs, party lines may harden. But the Swedish instinct for compromise is strong and might prevail.

CRACKDOWN IN THE UKRAINE

HARVEY FIRESIDE

Safeguarding the people from 'contamination'

Western analysts interpreted the reshuffling of the Soviet Politburo in April as evidence that General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev was consolidating the leadership in favor of his policy of detente with the West. But elevation of secret police head Yuri Andropov to the pinnacle at the top of the Party indicated that any external relaxation would be accompanied, like others in the Soviet past, by a tightening of domestic discipline.

This counterpoint policy to safeguard the people from "contamination" by the Western influences from countries their regime is engaging in closer diplomatic and commercial relations has been gestating for some time. It was highlighted in January 1972 by the arrests in cities all over the Ukraine of some twenty intellectuals. They were charged with helping to publish and circulate homemade typescript writings—so-called *samizdat* —ranging from an underground journal, *The Ukrainian Herald*, that has been appearing since January 1970, to idealistic pleas on behalf of native language and culture threatened by Russification, and even poems "erring" only by the fervor with which they celebrated their homeland.

Amnesty International, the London-based organization defending the cause of all political prisoners, has kept track of the Ukrainian repression that shows no signs of abating. The total of those arrested, generally on charges of unspecified "anti-Soviet activities," has swelled to a hundred. Some have been released, others still held in their fifteenth month of pretrial detention, though the criminal code limits investigative terms to nine months. About twenty have been brought to trial, usually in secret proceedings again contravening the code, charged with various acts "slandering the Soviet system" and "engaging in nationalist agitation," and given draconic sentences of eight, ten, even twelve years' imprisonment and exile.

News of the trials, blanked out by the Soviet press, trickles out slowly. Some presumably typical sentences include the following cases: an Orthodox priest, Vasyl Romanyuk, getting seven years' camp and three years' exile for overstepping the narrow official limits on the practice of religion; Zinoviy Antonyuk, a doctoral candidate at the Kiev Institute of Cybernetics, with the same sentence for copying an issue of the *Ukrainian Herald* and, a further charge he denies, sending it to Czechoslovakia; the poet Vasyl Stus, given five years of forced labor and three of internal exile for protesting the difficulties young Ukrainians had in being published, telling "anti-Soviet" jokes, and having his poems published abroad; Iran Kovalenko, a teacher of English, sentenced to five years in "strict-regime" camps for possessing *samizdat* works and speaking at a school meeting against the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia; Ihor Kalynets, a leading young poet, whose five years of forced labor plus three of exile total one less than the nine years meted out to his wife Iryna, for unsubstantiated charges of writing anti-Soviet materials.

Some of the most prominent defendants are still in prison awaiting trial. What is striking about them is that they belong to the generation that grew to maturity in the postwar years. They share an upbringing in the rigid mold of Stalin's last years and a radicalizing experience beginning in the late 1950s during the Khrushchev "thaw" that led them to question the gap between Soviet legal theories and practices in public, supposedly permissible, fashion. Their idealistic texts are taken from Lenin's strictures against "Russian chauvinism" and a literal reading of the U.S.S.R. Constitution, whose Article 17 proclaims "The right freely to secede from the U.S.S.R. reserved to every Union Republic." They are thus versts apart from the older anti-Communist generation that furnished some would-be collaborators to the

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Nazis during their three-year occupation and is still strong in émigré organizations intent on putting an end to Soviet rule.

The youthful generation of intellectuals has kept reiterating its Marxist faith, its hopes of ridding Soviet society of what it regards as corrupted individuals and specific agencies. The nice distinction is lost on the KGB, as its agents break up even the innocuous poetry reading on native themes around the Kiev statue of the 19th-century poet Taras Shevchenko, who had his confrontations with tsarist censors and police a hundred years ago. The most telling blow to the dogmatic outlook of the youth, however, came in 1965, when, in the previous wave of secret arrests and trials, they saw a score of leading intellectuals vanish into the labor camps of Moldavia in a travesty of "socialist legality."

A correspondent of a Kiev newspaper at those trials was Vyacheslav Chornovil, 27 years old, the model of a proper Communist journalist. He had been an outstanding Komsomol member since age 14, graduated with honors from the University of Kiev, rose to an editorial post at a radio station and a department chairmanship on *Moloda Gvardiya*, a Young Communist organ. The breaches of legality Chornovil witnessed so outraged him that he filed petitions of protest and refused to testify when summoned as witness to one of the political trials.

A fellow journalist and poet, Mykhaylo Osadchy, has described in a fictionalized memoir, *The Mote*, how Chornovil electrified the courtroom dozing through the trumped-up case. Chornovil declared,

> I protest against the court session being *in camera*. The Constitution of the U.S.S.R. and Article 20 of the Criminal Procedure Code guarantee that trials of this kind must always be held in public. This court is infringing the Constitution and the Code, therefore I consider the trial null and void, I refuse to give evidence and I am handing you this declaration to this effect.

The public prosecutor, "breathless with indignation," shouted, "You are an enemy!" The hysterical judge cried, "Take him out immediately!" But on his way out, Chornovil coolly deposited a bunch of flowers on the railing before the defendants. His temerity cost Chornovil a three-month sentence for contempt of court, his job, and the chance to enroll in graduate studies at the Kiev Pedagogical Institute.

From rising Young Communist, Chornovil had fallen into the status of endemic political suspect. His properly filed official protests against the trials next earned him a visit by agents of the KGB. Their search of his quarters netted only copies of his public petitions and a filmed text he claims was planted. Nonetheless, the evidence sufficed to send him away to three years at hard labor. Ironically, the day of sentencing, November 15, 1967, was also the day *The Chornovil Papers* surfaced in a Paris edition, entitled "Misfortune of the Intellect," a year before they became a best-seller in English translation.

The work comprised capsule biographies of twenty defendants in the 1965-66 purges, who had been sent to the labor camps where Chornovil now joined them for 18 months, having had his sentence reduced on the 50th anniversary of the Revolution. It furnished the world the first proof of the extensive repression in the Ukraine, after years of Soviet silence and denials. Other corroborations have appeared since then. The most detailed acount of the labor camps in the mid-sixties, Anatoly Marchenko's *My Testimony*, for example, mentions the large number of "nationalist" prisoners, from the Baltic states as well as the Ukraine.

Osadchy was tried last fall and given seven more years in the camps plus five of exile for "anti-Soviet" writings, presumably the ones he composed in prison. He had embarked on his journalistic career with impeccable Communist credentials, and had become a lecturer on ideology for the Lvov Regional Party Committee. Then in 1965, at age 29, he was swept along in the purges on a conspiracy charge, though he appears to have been totally innocent. Following his conviction, all copies of his volume of rather undistinguished nature poems were destroyed; however, halfway through his three-year term in camp, he found his métier in a cycle of prison verses that has become a *samizdat* classic.

Along with Chornovil, the literary critics Ivan Ozuba and Ivan Svitlychny and the writer Yevhen Sverstyuk are trapped in the revolving doors of the KGB—all stuck in prison while awaiting their trials for over a year. Dzuba had established a reputation for encouraging new talent and condemning second-raters, when, at age 33, he organized an unprecedented protest meeting against the 1965 arrests, at a Kiev cinema. He seems to have escaped for this and for memoranda addressed to government and Party officials by studiously couching his critique of Russian "great power chauvinism" in Marxist-Leninist language. It must have proved difficult to take issue with a plea to return the nationalities policy to the principles of the Soviet founder.

Dzyuba's memos appeared in the West in 1969, entitled *Internationalism or Russification?*—even then, another three years passed until the Ukrainian Writers' Union expelled him for having "slandered the Soviet system and the Party's nationality policy" by writings that were "actively used by our class enemies." He was arrested the following month, April 1972. Among his acts of courage, Dzuba's speech at the 1966 anniversary of the Babi-Yar mass executions of Jews outside Kiev must rank high. After memorializing this "common tragedy" for Jews and Ukrainians, he warned that "silence becomes an accomplice of injustice and servility." This was a clear jibe at the authorities who had never acknowledged the special suffering of Jews under the Nazis, let alone under Stalin's postwar purges.

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That Dzyuba had hit the mark when he found anti-Semitism "still present in our society" was shown by the official response to the April 1968 appeal by 139 Ukrainians from all walks of life against the 1965-66 trials uncovered by Chornovil. The underground *Chronicle of Current Events* in Moscow soon reported notices of dismissal and reprimands handed to the signatories, conspicuously laced with a number of anti-Semitic references. Soviet authorities were evidently not above appealing to baser Ukrainian emotions dating back to the days of the pogroms.

Despite darker strains in Ukrainian society, the young dissidents seem determined to break out of the parochial concerns that boxed in earlier generations. They are breaking new ground in making common cause with youthful protesters in Russia, as well as with other embattled minorities, such as the Jews, Baltic peoples and Crimean Tartars. The scattered band that calls itself the Human Rights Movement in Russia is, in its turn, recognizing the need to include the demands of non-Russian nationalities in its platform. Both of these developments constitute an advance over those 19th-century days when Russian liberals, with the notable exception of Alexander Herzen, found nothing objectionable in tsarist imperialism and when Ukrainian patriots were content to pursue their struggle in solitude.

THE SPORT'S REPORT

THE SCREEN

Imagine a rather paunchy man in a jockstrap crying his eyes out. Now you've got the perfect audience for *Bang the Drum Slowly*, the audience for whom the film was made. The film takes up where *Love Story* left off, with the revelation that the Beloved is dying of leukemia. In this case the victim, Bruce (Robert De Niro), is a man who is stupid and inept instead of a woman who is brilliant and accomplished. But it's all the same. We know that Bruce is stupid from the start, for just after he leaves Mayo Clinic his own best friend, Henry (Michael Moriarty), tells us he is, as if finding out you're dying of leukemia weren't enough of a put-down for one day. Pitching ace Henry has been holding out for a hundred-thousand plus contract, but now he signs for seventy thou on the condition that he and Bruce be made a package. Though Henry won't say why he wants such a deal, the club's otherwise rosin-hearted manager, Dutch (Vincent Gardenia), gives in at once because there's "a certain look" in Henry's eye.

As it turns out, this is the smartest move Dutch ever made. The whole first part of the season, no matter what kind of pep talks Dutch gives, the team goofs along a game or two off the pace. But when the word finally gets out about Bruce, it's just the thing to propel the team towards a pennant and pull it together. Neither Dutch nor anyone else has to have mixed feelings about keeping Bruce on either, since Bruce plays way over his head all season. (Leukemia is a swell disease that way, so tidy and microscopic. It seems you can even catch nine innings of baseball while entering its terminal stages. It's the answer to a moviemaker's prayers.) In the end even we need not feel bad, for Bruce has turned out to be less a tragic loss than a replay of Housman's "Athlete Dying Young."

In order to prevent Mark Harris' script from striking out, director John Hancock devises lots of little bits of physical business for his players. In one scene a baseline coach scratches, pats and rubs himself comically. In another Henry has to keep lifting the lid on a commode so Dutch can flip his cigarette. In a third Bruce is allowed to join the club's quartet and turns their TV appearance into a comedy routine with his bad timing. Hancock must realize that if he didn't keep us distracted from the plot with this sort of locker-room humor, we would take a seventh-inning stretch and never come back.

The most obscene and truly primal pornographic fantasies must of course be done with animation. They are too exaggerated and acrobatic for human actors to perform. Only graphics can render them explicitly and without resorting to mere symbolism or ritual enactment. Paradoxically, it may well be that such lethal fantasies—incest, homosexuality, nearly omnipotent sexual violence—are also admissible to the conscious mind only in cartoon form. Otherwise they would be too real for us to bear contemplating them. They are too gross, too unspeakable. The mind recoils.

But in cartoon form, as Ralph Bakshi has realized, these same beastly exaltations of the unconscious can be turned to popular entertainment. In a little opening vignette Bakshi's new animated feature, *Heavy Traffic*, offers us his rationale for depicting such things at all. A man who has just shot someone during a robbery is run over and killed by a cabby hurrying to pick up a fare at the curb. In a world where the legitimate hustles are as reckless and ruthless as the illegitimate, there's no point in making a comedy of manners. The less disguised man's aggressions and desires are, the funnier we ought to find them.

Bakshi has therefore made a film in which a shy young man named Michael pushes a nude girl off a roof while trying to mount her, brings his black girlfriend home to make love to her under his parents' eyes, and is solicited by his own mother in a dime-a-dance joint. He is also a spectator at numerous fights where his parents try to emasculate or eviscerate each

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other, where a homosexual masochist courts a beating, or where assorted Mafioso have their brains blown out. Since Michael is himself an underground cartoonist, I take it that this film not only depicts some of Bakshi's blackest sexual daydreams, but some of his autobiography as well. At the same time, though, Bakshi never forgets that our amusement (and perhaps his own sanity) depends on the abstracted, depersonalized atmosphere that animation lends to such lurid fantasies. In fact Bakshi does his utmost to enhance that atmosphere.

In *Fritz the Cat*, Bakshi's first feature, doing so was no problem because all the characters were animals. This automatically put the action at a distance and prevented the audience from identifying too much with the characters. But in the new film the characters are rendered as people, so Bakshi has to remove them from particular reality in other ways. One parent is a Jew and the other an Italian, for instance, making them both into archetypes instead of real people. Similarly, Michael is white while his girlfriend is black, which gives their love affair an aura more of social comment than romance. But perhaps Bakshi's boldest stroke of inventiveness is using footage from forties' Technicolor movies as a backdrop for his characters to play against. This generalizes the action yet another way, and makes it seem a larger historical portrait than it is.

The backgrounds out of old movies solve another problem for Bakshi as well. They relieve him of the need to draw his own backgrounds. This gives the new film a more finished, less compromised look than *Fritz the Cat* had, though Bakshi still fudges on the animation with crude short cuts like sliding the camera down the animation stand to stimulate dollying it. I suspect, however, that Bakshi is assuming we'll be so flabbergasted at the content of his work, we won't even notice the quality of the animation. A lot of very heavy people have flipped over *Heavy Traffiic,* Willard Van Dyke, the head of the Film Department at The Museum of Modern Art, among them. But the limitation of a film of this sort—the sort that stuns us by its pure audacity—is that no one is intelligible when stunned. Once Willard Van Dyke comes back to his senses, he may not think so much of this obscene Fantasia.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

AN APPEAL:—Holy Cross Brothers in a rural area in South India have been in charge of an orphanage which has succeeded in being self-sustaining for the past seven years. The orphanage derived its support from its own crops and poultry. This year, due to a disastrous crop failure, the Brothers are now forced to appeal for the funds needed to help "lodge, feed, clothe and educate the forty-five children in our care." Readers should send their contributions to: Brother K. S. Xavier, CSC Orphanage, Donnington—643208, Nilgiris District, South India. (Airmail: 21¢)

BILLIE AND BOBBY

MEDIA

The Bobby Riggs-Billie Jean King extravaganza had all the earmarks of a pure media event, an enormous creation sculpted out of thin air for the promotion of after-shave lotions, hair sprays, razor blades and candy bars. The contrary, however, may be true. What the papers and broadcasters were trying to treat casually and with predictable jokes seemed to have in fact a ferocious life of its own, a subterranean significance that kept confounding the manipulators and commentators. It pushed through the many layers of frivolity, driving the happenings in the Astrodome to near hysteria, frightening Howard Cosell and nearly wiping out whoever Bobby Riggs really is.

Before and after the event, writers for the *New York Times*, for example, were searching and apprehensive. "With no titles or playing for one's country at stake, the match is really much ado about nothing . . . What, then, is all the fuss about?" asked Neil Amour on the day of the match; he guessed that it was about money. The following day, John O'Connor wrote: "Perhaps it's just that the national trauma of Watergate demands psychic release. There has to be some explanation for the national absurdity of the 'tennis battle of the sexes.' "

The truth, of course, is in the slogan—"The Battle of the Sexes." By some magic of timing and circumstances, this confrontation between an aging playboy hustler and a tennis-obsessed woman came to symbolize many of the resentments and excitements that constitute the mixed-up American male-female relationship at the moment. During the week before the match, I was surprised at the number of normally intelligent and sophisticated men who said to me, "I hope he kills her," or words to that effect—statements clearly not for public consumption and usually followed by qualifications and tense jokes. Women pointedly said nothing at all on the subject to me but seemed to be whispering a great deal among themselves. Media representatives were drawn to the event but generally couldn't see what was in front of their eyes. Was it all about the new tennis boom? Was it about a quirky little "happy hustler"? They kept circling around.

By 8 o'clock on the night, millions of hearts were pounding and the jokes were drying up. TV-viewers gathered in groups and at parties to watch, too excited to sit quietly in their homes. The pictures from Texas were a daze of surreal images and sounds, particularly in color: the band pounding and the girls kicking; huge black athletes reclining at ringside amongst the pink and yellow movie stars; Howard Cosell in a tuxedo; gro-

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tesque caricatures of Bobby and Billie during the station breaks; the entrance of the gladiators, she borne aloft in a feathered conch, he in a ricksha pulled by showgirls; the presentation of a writhing pig from Billie to Bobby, of a giant candy bar from Bobby to Billie. The atmosphere was filled with orgiastic excitement and confusion. The first game actually began before Cosell was aware of it.

As the match itself progressed, the hostility between men and women in the audience—and between Cosell and Rosemary Casals in their TV commentary—came loudly out in the open. On the one hand, it was like the annual boys-against-the-girls basketball game where each side expresses its chauvinism in a refreshingly explicit way while at the same time wrestling and crashing into each other in a tantalizing sexual game. On a more obvious level, the spectators found it possible to sweep away all the politeness that clutters up man-woman contacts today and to groan and yell and pound their feet about these perplexities. Many men who have been officially supporting their wives' liberation and who had even been publicly putting down Bobby as a loudmouth know-nothing, were suddenly, if secretly, pleading with him to hold together, to keep going, to *win*. Women, once they smelled blood, were calling for the total destruction of the enemy. It was a ritual drama on a vast scale, releasing a flood of angers and resentments from a whole nation of spectators.

Bobby Riggs was an odd sort of sacrificial goat. He gave everyone the impression that he was on top of the situation while the pre-match promotion was accelerating, but it seems now that he probably wasn't. Just before his match with Margaret Court in early summer he had stumbled into the electric field of the Women's Lib movement, setting off a shower of sparks. This startled him but he apparently liked the glitter of it and tried to keep it going. Once he located the anti-Lib groove, he found it profitable to be more and more arrogant, but at the same time his age, his dumpy appearance and his dinky style of tennis seemed to cast him as a plucky underdog, a crafty old pro who was forced to use the skill of a lifetime to deal with the brute strength and speed of his dumb juniors—this a venerable and beloved type in American sports. He projected a persona which was sufficiently hateful but vaguely cute. Thus the male-female competition did not become uncomfortably blatant too early; jokes drifted around him, naked antagonisms were masked, and the drama could proceed.

It was early in the first set, however, that Howard Cosell said painfully, "The comedy has gone out of Bobby Riggs." We looked at the screen and it wasn't Bobby Riggs at all, but an older person with not a bad face, obviously worn out and sweaty. This person—whom we saw in close-up, not as an actor on a distant stage—did not seem a proper butt for the fan's jeers, but of course the ritual, once in motion, had to grind on to its inevitable conclusion.

The problem is that there was no final catharsis. The tragic hero-villain evaporated during a double fault. Women were left with a victim who was somehow unworthy of their fury, and men in any case just plain lost. Many men in the Astrodome audience seemed to be taking it very grumpily, to judge from their expressions, and one can imagine the male contingent at all the TV parties turning sullen and unpleasant.

After the fact, some of the newspaper writers were finally aware of what had happened, and their hearts were on their sleeves. Larry Merchant in the *New York Post* was almost suicidal: "All right, men, quit brooding and get to the dishes. Make sure the beds have hospital corners. And on the way to the supermarket why don't you stop off at the doctor's office for a little vasectomy."

Despite the fact that Mrs. King's victory has generally been judged a satisfactory, even chivalrous, ending to this saga—blessed the following day even by Senators Mansfield and Scott—the underlying problems obviously still rankle, perhaps even more so. This illustrates one of the problems with mass media: TV has demonstrated again its capacity to focus the entire country on a single event, unifying millions of people, for the space of those moments, as they have rarely been before. But the watchers may expect actual solutions to come out of this experience, whereas, as in the case of Bobby and Billie, they may end up with only a gigantic caricature of the problem. MICHAEL MURRAY

SR. MARY JEREMY FINNEGAN

AFTER-SONG

'I lean'd my back unto an aik
I thocht it was a trustie tree;
But first it bow'd and syne it brak . . .'

O rooted in fidelity
and tallest in hieratic cloak—
We thought it was a trusty tree.

Incense abased to vapid smoke,
the aura of Melchisidek
diminishing to legendry.

In coldness borne across the sea
what unpropitious voices spoke
that first it bowed and then it broke?

On earth reverberant with shock
the sacred balm flows waywardly.

We thought it was a trusty tree.

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WISCONSIN'S AMERICAN GOTHIC

SAM BASS WARNER, JR.

Wisconsin Death Trip

MICHAEL LESY

Pantheon, $5.95

In a wired metropolitan world where one's daily consciousness must cope with a flood of pictures, phrases, sounds, and fantasies which churn together real events with manufactured messages of governments and businesses how are we to know who we are? and where we came from? One method of orientation is to explore one's past to search for some ground from which to observe the rush of events which surge toward us.

For many reasons, mostly political and institutional, the historical profession is not now able to help many Americans to discover their past. Most published histories either fail to create a reality which the general reader can identify as the human condition, or, those that succeed at this first test fail to reach a past vantage point of sufficient relevance for a view of the present. Oscar Handlin has spoken of the current failure of history as a failure of style; it is more than that. It is a failure of style, content, and concept. In such circumstances experimenters are welcome, and I welcome Mr. Lesy and his attempt to discover for us our rural past, and to present that past in a way which might help us to understand who we now are.

Mr. Lesy's purpose is an ambitious one. In general he thinks that as 1973 metropolitan Americans we need to understand rural America of 1890 as urgently as rural Americans of 1890 needed to understand the metropolitan world which dominated their daily life. Why? Because having failed to understand our real life for the past 80 years we cannot come to grips with the exploitation inherent in the modern manifestations of urban capitalism. Instead of confronting the reality of American life we have for decades buried the truth of daily experience under a false contrast between a rural Arcadia of olden times and an evil urban present. Lesy wants to teach us a new history. His history begins in the late nineteenth century of rural poverty—a moment when American farmers looked towards the city as a fantasy place of wealth, magic technology, and instant gratification. He wants us to believe that in the nineties most Americans saw our cities as a country girl or boy sees the carnival—the bright lights, crowds, noise, freaks, and shows hide the squalor of both the performers and the audience. Thus, the immigrant phrase that "the streets were paved with gold" was but a capsule for a host of fantasies shared by rural Americans and overseas immigrants.

"The people who left the land came to the cities not to get jobs but to be free of them, not to get work but to be entertained, not to be masters but to be charges. They followed yellow brick roads to emerald cities presided over by imaginary wizards who would permit them to live in happy adolescence for the rest of their lives. By leaving the land, they disavowed a certain kind of adulthood whose mature rewards they understood to be confusion and bereavement. By going to the emerald cities, they chose a certain kind of adolescence forever free from frailty, responsibility, and death. It is this adolescent city culture, created out of the desperate needs and fantasies of people fleeing from the the traps and tragedies of late nineteenth century country life, that still inspires us seventy years later."

Lesy has artfully chosen his subject for a book on the late nineteenth century rural crisis: Jackson County, and its county seat, Black River Falls, 1885-1900. A Wisconsin backwater whose moment of economic growth had already passed with the cutting of its pines, it was going nowhere during the end of the last century, nor has it been able to do more than hold its own since (1970 population, county 15,000, town 3,300). Jackson County is adjacent to Trempeleau County in west central Wisconsin, the site of Curti's definitive social science analysis of frontier America. Perhaps the locale was originally selected as a follow-up of that classic study. In any case, surely here is a county as suitable as the South Carolina shore, or Farrell's Chicago South Side, in which we attempt to cut down our still-vigorous booster mythology.

The stylistic innovation consists of the adaptation of the technique of montage to a history book. Except for brief introductory and concluding chapters the author is silent and the reader is presented with the materials of the past for his own inspection. The montage is composed of two kinds of items: 140 photographs taken by a local photographer during the years 1890-1910, and a selection of paragraphs from the local newspaper, a local history, a town gossip, patient records in a mental hospital, and some rural novels, only one of which is contemporary.

The photographs are presented without captions or dates, but are arranged in a rough sequence of the life cycle, from infancy through maturity to death and then back to courtship. Despite the formal conventions of the day and the limitations of commissioned photography, the pictures furnish a wealth of details from the past—infants and infant caskets, dress styles and work clothes, shacks, barns and mansions, lumbermen, Indians and blacks, steam tractors and carriage shops, clowning young people and three-generation portraits. I can't believe any reader will

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fail to find items of his own personal interest in this collection. The publisher is to be congratulated for the excellent reproductions and the design which makes this photographic presentation effective.

The paragraphs, arranged in temporal order, are to give the reader a guide to the interpretation of the photographs, and they carry the author's thesis. They consist of the heavily emotion-laden subjects of fire, disease, death, insanity, suicide, crime, business failure, Indians, blacks, and poverty. Some paragraphs tell of sensational ax murders, brutal beatings, frozen despair, and outright horror. Others are matter-of-fact reports of accident, failure, disease, and crime. Taken together the quotations of the text surely dispel the Arcadian myth and pile still further evidence on the already full shelf of books about the hardships and bitterness of American rural life.

Yet Mr. Lesy wants to go beyond Garland, Masters, Dreiser, Norris, Cather, Lewis, Dos Passos, and Rolvaag to stake a claim for psychohistory. Where our writers could portray the human condition of the past, psychohistory will diagnose the rural environment and its most common psychological adaptations. In this period, according to the author, the effects of capitalist exploitation manifested themselves in an unusually high incidence of paranoia and an obsessive-compulsive copying style.

The claim is pretentious. One cannot deduce from the fragmentary behavioral evidence of old photographs and newspaper paragraphs a reliable diagnosis of the mental diseases of a population. Such an undertaking employing today's newspapers would be laughed at; more folly to attempt it for the past. The imaginative theme about the countryman's vision of the city is given without one bit of evidence about Jackson County's attitudes. I suspect the origin of this idea rests with Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*. The author contends that his decade and a half was peculiarly a period of suffering and mental disease, but no attempt was made to compare his evidence with other places or times.

In short, in reaching for a new style the author has ignored both the canons of historical and psychological evidence. Mr. Lesy seems to have been overpowered by staring too long at his own montage. Like many productions which come towards us every night his is an entertaining and informative work, but like so many the medium has swallowed up the message. *Wisconsin Death Trip* is historical voyeurism, not history.

Funland and Other Poems

DANNIE ABSE

World, $6.95

Gnomes and Occasions

HOWARD NEMEROV

Chicago, $5.95

SAMUEL HAZO

The Welsh have such a way with English. Whether it's Thomas, Bevan or Burton (or Abse), there's no mistaking that Welsh way with otherwise unsinging syllables. Dannie Abse's *Selected Poems* several years ago established his reputation as a major poet of that same singing tongue, and his new book, *Funland*, extends the melody.

Let it be known immediately that Dannie Abse is Dr. Abse, and let it be known further that his profession finds its way into his poetry. (How many American poets can say that? Those who teach, for example, seem to write about everything but students and the fruitful mindaches of learning. Instead, we get summer or sabbatical subjects.) But Dr. Abse's poetry is not a way out of or away from his daily reality but a deeper way into it. In "The Case" he wrestles with the doctor's need to keep one of his patients from becoming merely another case. In "Miracle" he writes movingly of a priest terminally ill with cancer. Disbelieving in conventionally miraculous cures, the priest contents himself with appreciating the overt miracles of rainbows and tangerines which have been happening all along. "Last night, the priest dreamed he quit his church/at midnight, and then saw vividly/a rainbow in the black sky. /I said, every day, you can see/conjunctions equally odd—awake and sane, that is—/a tangerine on the snow, say./Such things are no more incredible than God."

Dr. Abse can invent a poem out of car journeys, racetrack betting or moon souvenirs. In each poem you meet and enjoy the same man. You say to yourself that this doctor is a man upon whom so little is lost, who has an eye, who knows more than surfaces. When he is concerned, you find yourself becoming concerned, as in the final lines of "A New Diary": "So I stop, ask: whom should I commemorate,/and who, perhaps is crossing out my name now/from some future diary? Oh my God,/Morwenna, Julie, don't forget me, Kate." When he is caustic, you also taste the bile on your own tongue as in "Portrait of the Artist as a Middle-Aged Man." And when he is sad, you are brother to the same sadness, as in the remarkable elegy called "Peachstone."

> I do not visit his grave. He is not there.
> Out of hearing, out of reach. I miss him here,
> seeing hair grease at the back of a chair
> near a firegrate where his spit sizzled,
> or noting, in the cut-glass bowl, a peach.
>
> For that night his wife brought him a peach,
> his favorite fruit, while the sick light glowed,
> and his slack, dry mouth sucked, sucked, sucked,
> with dying eyes closed—perhaps for her sake—
> till bright as blood the peachstone showed.

I have a suspicion that Dr. Abse, being a singer in the Welsh sense, is, like all singers, best in those poems of his that are essentially lyrical. Perhaps this is why I appreciate his long, title poem "Funland" not as a whole but

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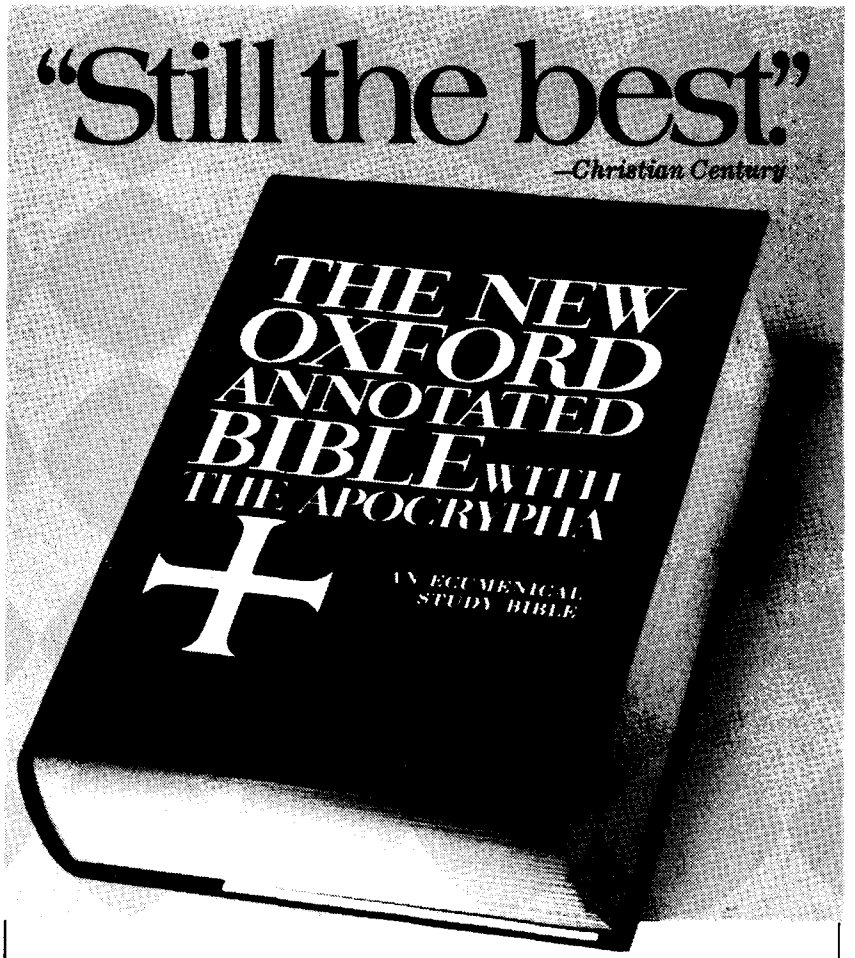
in its parts. Poetically speaking, the parts of a poem or any living thing never equal the whole; poetry is not a summation. Hart Crane ran into the same problem in "The Bridge," and Poe warned lyric poets of the dangers of 'long-ness' a century ago. But this may be quibbling. I suspect I would only have to hear Dr. Abse read the poem aloud so as to be Welshed away from even these minor reservations.

Aristotle wrote that one does not call a man courageous because he has performed one courageous act but because courageous acts are habitual with him. Applied to poetry, it would seem that a man would be called a habitual poet if good poems are habitual with him. On the other hand, there are some who say that a man is a poet if he has written but one good poem in the same sense that one birth makes a mother. Howard Nemerov has no problem either way. He has written a good poem not merely once but repeatedly.

If one could choose a word to describe Nemerov's art, one would have to settle for a coinage somewhere between *civilized* and *right*. But it is invariably civility with flair. You sense it whether he is writing about a recording of Casals playing Bach ("I watch the circling stillness of the disc") or commenting on that void that is more than mere absence:

> Without my meaning nothing, nothing means.
> I am the wave for which the worlds make way.
> A term of time, and sometimes too of death,
> I am the silence in the things you say.

Perhaps one of the strongest facets of Nemerov's talent emerges in his satirical poems, many of them quite short but all with the pith that characterized a poem of his called "Boom!" some years back. It is here that the poems flourish with the kind of inevitability and ineluctability that poems must have to leave us thinking that they are absolutely beyond improvement or paraphrase. They simply are what they are, as in the following quatrains entitled



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"Knowledge" and "The Poet as Eagle Scout" respectively:

Not living for each other's sake,
Mind and the world will rarely rime;
The raindrops aiming at the lake
Are right on target every time.

* * *

I said to the stone, "Am I standing all right?"
"How's this for running?" I said to the stream.
"Is it bright enough for you?" I asked the light.
And I told my dream, "You're a damn fine dream."

When you read other poems like "Myth and Ritual" or "Kicks," you might be tempted to say that Nemerov is a poet of fashionable despair or that he borders on the pessimistic ennui of the disillusioned idealist. But the temptation lasts only for a moment because Nemerov himself erases it. When he is caustic, it is only to reach bedrock. When he is impatient with scruff, it is because scruff gets in the way of experiencing essences. With the scruff gone, he gives us a world of love and hope that save us from ourselves and save our children for and perhaps from us:

A school is where they grind the grain of thought,
And grind the children who must mind the thought.
It may be those two grindings are but one,
As from the alphabet come Shakespeare's Plays,
As from the integers comes Euler's Law,
As from the whole, inseparably, the lives,

The shrunken lives that have not been set free
By law or by poetic phantasy.
But may they be. My child has disappeared
Behind the schoolroom door. And should I live
To see his coming forth, a life away,
I know my hope, but do not know its form

Nor hope to know it. May the fathers he finds
Among his teachers have a care of him
More than his father could. How that will look
I do not know, I do not need to know.
Even our tears belong to ritual.
But may great kindness come of it in the end.

D'Annunzio

PHILIPPE JULLIAN

Viking, $12.95

GABRIEL GERSH

Now that we are safely out of it, we can scarcely help looking back at the first half of the century with fascinated horror, trying to put a name to this curious monster which fathered the present decade. The age of the common man? Perhaps. But more important, the age of the great megalomaniacs—the age when the reformers like the leveling Mill and the dutiful Gladstone were replaced by William Randolph Hearst, Cecil B. De Mille and the European dictators.

Among this race of heavy-footed supermen one stands out, a perfect symbol of the age's sickness. He is not Stalin, not even Hitler, neither of whom ever claimed to be more than a political superman, but Gabriele D'Annunzio, the Italian "John the Baptist of Fascism," who is the subject of Philippe Jullian's biography. D'Annunzio's megalomania fought on all fronts at once. By a generation of Italians he was revered as *l'uomo universale*. For them he was Italy's poet, novelist, dramatist, lover, soldier, airman, politician, ambassador and general figurehead. At one point he almost became their dictator too. His conceit was unbounded. "The world must see," he wrote, "that *I am capable of everything*." The italics are his.

With the present revival of interest in *art nouveau* it is natural that an attempt should be made to reassert the importance of D'Annunzio, a man whose habits were as interesting a monument of the *fin de siècle* era as

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any painting by Khnopff, Klinger or Puvis de Chavannes. In fact, D'Annunzio's reputation has a better title to survival than that of his contemporaries, since he had an impact on some of the best writers of the 20th century. Mr. Jullian mentions Henry de Montherlant's admiration for D'Annunzio. He suggests that Apollinaire, Valery Larbaud, Ezra Pound and Lawrence Durrell may have been influenced by him. But there are other, more surprising examples to which he does not refer: James Joyce, for instance, who thought that in *Il Fuoco* D'Annunzio surpassed even Flaubert, and Antonin Artaud, who included *La Gioconda* among the most moving plays he had seen.

The merit of Mr. Jullian's book is that although it makes no attempt to extenuate the general meretriciousness of most of D'Annunzio's performances, it does make us see what an extraordinary being he was, what a feast he provided for the epicure of the odd. Moreover, what is surprising, it ends by making us feel sorry for the man. While D'Annunzio was the greatest ruffian on the Italian scene, one can have little sympathy for him. But the rise of a still greater ruffian—Mussolini—and the tale of the poet's declining years in his grandiose villa on Lake Garda, when it had been made clear to him that one superman at a time would be tolerated, has in it the stuff of tragedy.

The career, which Mr. Jullian traces in considerable detail, falls into two halves. Born at Pescara in the Abruzzi, of a plebeian family, D'Annunzio, with no special physical gifts, had briskly elevated himself from writing gossip columns to the status of a great poet. He lived in the highest style, marrying into nobility and thereafter pursuing women with frenzy.

All this constituted one legend; and; if World War I had not occurred, it might have been the only legend. But with that war, part two of his career came into being, and D'Annunzio, who had physical courage, became a soldier, a sailor and an aviator and projected himself as a sort of Nietzschean figure.

After the war the climax of his career arrived with his occupation (while the statesmen were dithering at Versailles) of the disputed territory of Fiume. And this exploit, the details of which are described by Mr. Jullian, gave D'Annunzio his moment of glory. For fifteen months the poet held supreme sway in his little kingdom and entertained himself and the world by evolving constitutions which seem as if Ezra Pound had drawn up the *Code Napoléon*.

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REVIEWERS

SAM BASS WARNER, JR., teaches in the History Department at Boston University.

SAMUEL HAZO, is the author of several books of poetry, most recently, *Once for the Last Bandit* (U. of Pittsburgh Press).

GABRIEL GERSH edited and translated a collection of D'Annunzio's essays for publication in the U.S. and England.

ELLIOTT WRIGHT is on the staff of Religious News Service.

The Church's "new" answers are old-hat. It's time to ask new questions.

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Andrew Greeley
THE NEW AGENDA
A Proposal for a New Approach to Fundamental Religious Issues in Contemporary Terms
DOUBLEDAY

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Mussolini, jealous of D'Annunzio's greater popularity, refused to come to his aid in Fiume, and later, very astutely, silenced him by treating him as a national monument. But he led a life of frantic activity. His collected works ran to more than 44 volumes.

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Perhaps Croce expressed the truth when he said: "In D'Annunzio there is something of both the charlatan and the impotent in spite of his potential qualities and technical ability. D'Annunzio presents the spectacle of a man continually in search of his own personality. All great artists have experienced life and have something to say. D'Annunzio has experienced foreign books a la mode and he has absolutely nothing to say."

Mr. Jullian is very much at ease with the complexity of the subject. Given the welter of sources, he has chosen a measure of foreshortening and compression which enhances the readability of the book. His portrait of D'Annunzio is executed with a fine touch and a full understanding of the historical context.

He starts his chapters with delightful recreations of the age and places which provided the setting for D'Annunzio's adventures and his books. He is not bound by the chronological sequence of events and shuttles back and forth in time and place to follow the thread of his narrative. He often writes about the books first and then about the biographical details from which they spring. Though he is concerned about the man and the legend as well as the writer and his reputation, he is not a victim of an apologetic or a deprecatory mood. As a result, the book has a sense of proportion, it does its level best to be fair and it is extremely entertaining.

IN BRIEF

A SPECTACLE UNTO THE WORLD: *The Catholic Worker Movement. By Robert Coles and Jon Erikson. New York: Viking, $10. A Spectacle Unto the World* is two separate, complementary essays. First, in 48 pages of mostly excellent photographs, Jon Erickson describes New York City's Bowery, the turf of the Catholic Worker movement, and the people and activities at the mission where Dorothy Day remains the dominant human force. The pictures supply the framework for Robert Coles' meditation on commitment. Coles, psychiatrist and brilliant chronicler of poverty and misery in the modern South, focuses primarily on Miss Day, but he also deals with Peter Maurin, co-founder of the Catholic Worker, and his main purpose is to capture a spirit. The author is awed by tenacious dedication and he holds the Catholic Worker movement out as a Pauline spectacle (almost stumbling block) in a world of casual concerns and selfish motivations. The text is neither analytical—in a psychiatric sense—nor does it add much to the biography of Miss Day. It is reverential, spiritual. Coles and Erikson have collaborated on a beautiful book, the kind for display on a cocktail table. But, despite its beauty, a cocktail table book on the Catholic Worker is bothersome. Anyone with $10.00 for "a spectacle unto the world" might better spend half on paperback reprints of Dorothy Day's writings and send the remainder to the Catholic Worker.

ELLIOTT WRIGHT

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 51)

Sept. 21 issue. Like other reviewers, he believes that swiping material from other writers is justified if the one who swipes is a great artist serving the ends of his art. There are practical questions about this thesis as far as publishing is concerned. Who, for example, is to decide who qualifies as a literary artist with the right to borrow from "pedestrian writers"—pedestrian is Maloff's term? But there is also an ethical issue. If we accept the premise that an artist can steal for the sake of art, we are granting that the end justifies the means.

Certainly, there is objection to applying this rule broadly. Hundreds of thousands of words have been set in type recently to condemn the Watergaters for this view of morality, and politics. Now, it can be said that in discussing Mailer we are concerned with Art while in condemning the Waterbugs we are at the level of lousy politics. Artists are

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on one level. Presidents—at least one for whose downfall liberals have been waiting for years—are something less. Elevate the Artist and his income; hang the politician.

But this is not a healthy rule for our society, and I am pleased to read Michael Novak on another page of your issue. He points out that the moral problem runs from the President to Mailer and to soap-box derbies (not stock-car races). In standards of behavior there has to be a connection from Washington to all our streets and homes, a connection that runs both ways.

Let me illustrate: Many years ago Damon Runyon wrote "If there is anything that is illegal in New York, it is killing a policeman." Someone added: "And parking by a fireplug." In those days, these were among the "Things That Were Not Done." When the code was violated, just about everyone from gangsters up was upset. Now we are in a time when the question is not whether policemen get killed but what is the body count. And we all park where we see a spot, on the ground that everyone does it, and our business justifies leaving a car blocking a street or even a hydrant. When we drop standards about small matters, we weaken the code for murder and all sorts of high crimes and misdemeanors. Millions of little wrongs can be poisonous to us all.

We all want higher standards in our elected and appointed officials. We will be in a better position to demand them if we get our own affairs in a bit better order. We might make certain sacrifices, such as giving up running red lights, stealing carts from supermarkets, and cheating on the income tax. And maybe something could be done to spread a newer attitude around and up to Washington. We don't want to become smug and priggish—rather, we need a sense of charity and humility along with a belief that we can expect officials to be somewhat true to the Constitution.

So, I hope the review of *Marilyn* will not lead many people to pay the publisher and the author. I hope many people will read Michael Novak's piece.

LORING BATTEN

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Michael Novak (Cont.)

of all.

One characteristic our forefathers attributed to the common man: a pronounced cynicism about politicians. Centuries of experience have hardened that cynicism. The lessons of the "New World" confirm those of the "Old."

Our enlightened elites often threaten to *lose* their faith in government, their trust in political leaders. The common man has seldom indulged in either. He barely trusts himself, why should he trust politicians?

Perhaps, then, the 200th birthday of the Republic will provide occasion for a reversal. Perhaps the phrase "the common man" will come back into honor. It will, after all, be the common man's birthday as much as anybody's. In no other country of the world is he, despite everything, so much the one who ultimately, slowly, establishes the agenda, and "throws the rascals out." His participation in power is in this last respect mainly negative. But it is, from time to time, effective.

When on all too-rare occasions our leaders appeal to his aspirations, to the best that is in him, the common man's common sense often leads him to prefer the good to the mediocre, the great to the second-rate. No moralist, he sometimes prefers a knave to a fool. The common man especially the despised among them, the Catholics and the "rednecks," gave this country the great explosion of progressive politics in its history beginning in 1932.

So may the 200th anniversary of the Republic be a happily vulgar celebration! (It can hardly be more vulgar than parties for Truman Capote or for Norman Mailer.) Let it be celebrated by churchgoing and family dinners; by outings with relatives, perhaps; by a patriotic speech or two to reawaken the age-old cynicism; and by jugs of homemade wine, grandpa's beer-and-whiskey, and Uncle Emil's violin.

Millions still celebrate such rituals, rejoice in such simple mysteries. They are not the enemy.

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